



REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 2, 6, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,712,892 to *Masucci* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,000,753 to *Cone, II*;

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Masucci* in view of U.S. Patent No 5,884,827 to *Stein*; and

Claims 3 - 5, 7 - 12, 14, 15, and 17 - 20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable over the prior art of record if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Summary of the Personal Interview of July 27, 2001

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the personal interview with Applicants' representative on July 27, 2001. During the interview, the Examiner and Applicants' representative discussed the prior art references of record in the application, including *Cone, II*, *Masucci*, and *Stein*. Independent claims 1, 6, 13, and 16 were also discussed. Applicants respectfully traversed the Examiner's assertions that the features of the independent claims were shown in the references. The Examiner suggested possible changes to the independent claims to make them clearly allowable over the references.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 6, 13, and 16 as suggested by the Examiner during the interview summarized above. Applicants have also added new dependant claims 21 - 28. Thus, claims 1 - 28 are pending, and are respectfully submitted for consideration by the Examiner.

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The Rejection of Independent Claims 1, 6, 13, and 16

Independent claims 1, 6, 13, and 16 were rejected over the prior art of record. Applicants have amended each of the independent claims as suggested by the Examiner during the interview of July 27, 2001. In view of these changes, Applicants earnestly solicit allowance of the independent claims.

The Rejection of and Objection to Dependent Claims 2 - 5, 7 - 12, 14, 15, and 17 - 20

Dependent claim 2 was rejected over the prior art of record, and dependent claims 3 - 5, 7 - 12, 14, 15, and 17 - 20 were objected to as being dependent on rejected base claims. Claims 2 - 5, 7 - 12, 14, 15, and 17 - 20 each ultimately depend from one of the independent claims 1, 6, 13, and 16. It is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims recite patentably distinct subject matter, but are clearly allowable at least because they depend from the allowable independent claims.

New Claims 21 - 28 are Allowable

New claims 21 - 28 depend from independent claims 1, 6, 13, and 16, and are therefore also allowable for at least the same reasons as dependent claims discussed above.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. **Should the Examiner feel that there remain any matters outstanding before a Notice of Allowance may issue, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at 202-467-7962.**

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Attached hereto are the amendments made to the claims. The attached sheets are captioned "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Respectfully submitted,

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